

Domestic Life

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give each other sympathy in their affliction. If one was cut off from 825
 close, he would die of grief. The Bantals have a similar belief,
 but I could not learn whether it was universal among the Tania.

Most of the Tania territory is poorly suited to cattle culture 835
 because of the heavy forest and constant rain. It is only along the 841
 eastern margin of their lands, where they border on the plains,
 that one finds real grazing country. The Tania lands are usually
 small and, although cattle have great social significance, they con- 845
 tribute little to the physical well-being of the people. They are 846
 only killed in connection with ceremonies, and the average Tania
 does not taste beef once a month. Indeed, cattle killings are so 847
 rare that to dream of eating or eating beef is a bad omen, bringing
 a fever to the family. Hides are so little used that, until European 848
 traders provided a market for them, it was customary to cut up
 the animals without flaying them and cook meat and skins together.

The Mandas consider milk a luxury, and it is almost impossible 854
 to produce it in their territory. It is a by-product, taken only when 852
 the cow seems to have more than enough to feed her calf. Milking,
 like everything else connected with cattle, is done exclusively by
 men. The explanation given for this is that it is a dangerous occupa-
 tion. Actually, it is a laborious process, requiring three persons.
 One man holds the calf where the cow can see and lick it, another
 milks, usually squatting on the right side, and a third holds the cow's 853
 tail over her back and gently rubs her vagina with his fingers. The 854
 milk is boiled at once, while still warm. It is considered disgusting
 to drink it fresh. After boiling, it is either drunk or cooked with rice.

The Bantals make more use of milk and are somewhat more expert 859
 at milking, although they use the same method. They rarely boil 852
 their milk. A little is drunk fresh, but most of it is deliberately
 curdled. A little sour milk is always left in the milking gourd so
 that the new milk turns almost at once. The curds are eaten with a 860
 spoon and the whey drunk. None of the Tania know how to make 861
 butter or cheese.

Apparently cow's milk was rarely if ever used to supplement or 855
 replace mother's milk in feeding nursing infants. The idea has 857
 recently been borrowed from Europeans, but it is still considered
 rather unusual and is used only as a last resort.

The wheel and plow were unknown in Malagasy prior to 877
 European contact. The Tania never use their cattle for draught 872
 or transport and this holds for the rest of the island, with one or
 two exceptions. The Imerina and Bantals now use ox carts and

are a few other forms and one rectangular salt mortar, with a handle, *gusa* collected (Fig. 6, h).

The native chilies are small, rarely over an inch in length, and bright red. They are extremely hot. The natives pound them up, seeds and all, in mortars similar to those used for salt. They are usually taken fresh from the bushes, which seem to be in bearing most of the year, but are occasionally dried.

Salt and chilies are sprinkled over the food after it has been served, each person seasoning his portion according to his taste.

UTENSILS

In describing Tanala utensils it is necessary to distinguish between the *Zafimaniry* group, with its immediate neighbors, and the other members of the tribe. The *Zafimaniry*, who are recent immigrants from the plateau, resemble the *Betsileo* in their extensive use of wooden utensils and drinking horns. These have been diffused to the gentes in contact with them. The other Tanala gentes rarely use wooden utensils and have no drinking horns. In this respect they resemble the tribes of the east coast.

It seems curious that in a heavily forested region the only group to use wooden utensils should be one which has come from an area in which wood is much less abundant, but there are other anomalies as well. None of the Tanala employ bark utensils, although there is plenty of good material available. Gourds, which grow well in the region, are very little used. The *Menabe* have practically no gourd utensils. The *Thonga* use gourds for milk bottles, but this is probably in imitation of the *Betsileo*.

All the Tanala, except the *Zafimaniry*, serve their boiled rice on small square mats or in shallow rectangular baskets (Fig. 6, f). The basket or mat is first covered with a layer of green leaves. Liquids are served in short joints of bamboo or in leaf dishes. These dishes are made from pandanus or other long, broad leaves which are folded to make an oblong receptacle. Usually the ends of the leaf are simply turned up and tied (Fig. 6, h). There are a few well-made dishes of pandanus in which the ends are cut short, folded and sewn together. A narrow splint of bamboo is used to reinforce the end (Fig. 6, g). Spoons are made from strips of leaf, folded and tied (Fig. 6, j). All except the sewn dishes are made from green leaves and renewed at every meal.

Large wooden ladles are used by all the Tanala for dipping food from the pot (Fig. 7, c). Some of these used at feasts and sacrifices

CUSTOMS IN EATING

- 264 [512] The Tanala family rises at dawn and goes to work at once, to take advantage of the morning coolness. If any food is left from the previous night's meal, there will be a cold breakfast, but no cooking is done at this time. The first regular meal is served a little before noon and the second at sunset. Hospitality is casual and universal. Anyone who is in the house when a meal is ready partakes as a matter of course.

On all ordinary occasions the food is regularly served, not eaten from the pot. The woman of the house spreads a clean mat on the floor near the fireplace and everyone washes his hands and mouth. The woman then dishes out the rice and vegetable foods while the man divides and distributes the meat, if there is any. The husband's rice, and that of honored guests, is served separately, while the woman and children eat from a common dish. In most gentes it is customary [534] to place the dish of the husband or guest on a small stand of basket-work, $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 inches high (Fig. 8, f, g, h). This symbolizes his elevation above the rest of the household.

The rice is served first. When a mound of it has been piled on each dish, the woman flattens the top of it with the back of her rice ladle and pours on the other food. The salt and pimento mortars have been placed on the mat and each one seasons his own food with them. The head of the house is served first and no one else can begin eating until he has commenced. Each person has his own spoon and it is considered the height of ill manners to plunge the hands into the common dish. Foods which have to be eaten with the fingers, such as meat, are served separately. Simple forks, made [412] from straight pieces of bone, are sometimes used.

The natives usually eat rapidly and almost in silence. When the food has been consumed, the hands and mouth are washed again and everyone relaxes. They loiter about and chat for a half hour or more. The woman gathers up the dishes and throws the scraps of food out of the door, to the chickens. Wooden utensils are washed after each meal and hung up to dry. Spoons, after washing, are placed in small openwork baskets (Fig. 13, f) or thrust through holes in a narrow strip of matting (Fig. 7, j). These spoon holders are usually hung from the center post of the house, above the fireplace. The cooking pots are rarely washed, this being considered a waste of time.

261 The natives have enormous appetites. A Tanala man will eat two to three times as much, by bulk, as a white laborer. They are